

News from the Wyoming Department of Health

Wednesday, May 27, 2009

First Wyoming Swine Flu (H1N1) Case Confirmed

Lab testing at the Wyoming Public Health Laboratory has confirmed the first known infection of a state resident with the swine flu (novel H1N1) virus, according to Wyoming Department of Health officials.

Dr. Tracy Murphy, state epidemiologist with the Wyoming Department of Health, said the first indentified case involves a male youth from Laramie County.

“With so many widespread locations of swine flu cases reported in other states and around the world, it was expected that we would also find the virus here in Wyoming,” Murphy said.

The department has been encouraging enhanced influenza testing around the state by Wyoming medical professionals since April 26. More than 250 samples have been screened for swine flu at the Wyoming Public Health Laboratory since that time.

Dr. Brent Sherard, Wyoming Department of Health director and state health officer, said so far the reported swine flu illnesses in the United States have been fairly comparable to what is seen with seasonal influenza. Symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headaches, and fatigue. Some patients have also reported diarrhea and vomiting.

“Wyoming residents should take common-sense steps to protect themselves and their families from spreading this illness,” he said.

Actions to help prevent the spread of swine flu recommended by Sherard and Murphy include:

- Staying home from work, school or travel while ill with flu-like symptoms such as fever, cough, sore throat and body aches. Sherard said those who are severely ill (such as having trouble breathing) should seek medical care.
- Frequent hand washing with soap and water, or the use of an alcohol-based hand gel.
- Covering noses and mouths with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing, and throwing used tissues in a trash can.
- Avoiding contact with ill persons.

“These are the same actions we recommend each year to help prevent the spread of seasonal flu and other illnesses,” Sherard said.

Murphy noted that influenza viruses can be somewhat unpredictable. “We’re asking everyone to stay informed about future developments involving this new strain and to stay tuned for future advice from state and local health officials.”

Swine flu (novel H1N1 flu) is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by a type A influenza virus that regularly causes outbreaks of influenza among pigs. While swine flu viruses do not normally infect people, the strain of swine flu virus that is currently in the news has been confirmed to spread from human to human. Swine influenza viruses are not transmitted by food and a person cannot get swine influenza from eating pork products.

More information about the swine flu situation and Wyoming is available online at www.health.wyo.gov .

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